



Tupelo Times

JUNE, JULY & AUGUST 2010 VOL. 6, NO. 3

The Newsletter of the **Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center**

A L o s t R e s o u r c e

Mark Twain was once quoted as saying, "The Mississippi River will always have its own way; no engineering skill can persuade it to do otherwise..." Apparently, Twain did not grasp the drive of men when determined to change mother nature. This once majestic meandering river is now merely one steep ditch used to transport goods from town to town. Through dredging, channelizing and levee construction, man has potentially altered the river forever. Gone are the vast floodplains, bottomland forests and swamps. They are now replaced with towns, golf courses and farmland. These dramatic changes have some very real and lasting effects on the species that call the Mississippi River home.

This habitat loss goes hand-in-hand with the loss of many of our river and wetland creatures. One of the best examples of this is the least tern. While many folks may go their entire life without ever knowing about a least tern, this small bird's life and struggles are focused around the Mississippi River. This tiny bird travels great distances to nest on sand bars where they lay a few eggs. However, before they can even nest, they have to find a partner. We can all relate to the power of receiving and giving gifts and it is no different in the world of the least tern. Male terns, looking to court a female, catch small fish that they give to the female as an offering. Once they have finally selected their mates and the females have laid their eggs, the struggle begins. Sand bars make for the perfect habitat to lay these eggs but also offer up many challenges. To begin with, the sand can become too hot for the eggs to survive. To relieve this problem, the terns dip their wings into the cooler water then pat down the eggs to help regulate temperature.

Secondly, if the river level decreases drastically, predators gain access to the islands and invade the nests. To prevent invasions, terns "mob" or dive-bomb predators in an attempt to stave off attackers. Unfortunately, with the channelization of rivers, these sand bars are few and far between.

Terns are also indicators to the overall health of the river. Since they dine on small minnows, a decline in least terns could mean a decline in minnow populations. Minnows need a variety of bottom substrates and river depths to survive which channelized rivers no longer provide. Why is that important to humans? Not only are these small fish a meal for the terns, but a buffet for game fish such as flathead catfish and striped bass. Personally, as an angler, I want to see these species continue to flourish.

This isn't all doom and gloom. We do have some bright spots and glimpses of good to come. Many farmers are beginning to understand the importance of seasonal flooding on crops so they are not farming right up to the river banks. Also, backwater channels are being established as nurseries for many different aquatic animals. Lastly, the importance of the river for recreation and scenery has continually become more important in the lives of many Missourians.

Mark Twain may not have been completely right but let's not totally prove him wrong. Learn more about the large river and the animals that rely on its waters. Help with local river cleanups to restore its beauty. Lastly, as Twain did, venture out on the river and help reconnect with the Mighty Mississippi.

*By Jeremy Soucy
Education Specialist*

The Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center is now closed on Sundays. The nature center building will remain open Tuesday-Saturday 8-5, with the grounds and trails open seven days a week. Closure on Sunday is an effort by the Missouri Department of Conservation to minimize costs and to operate within the department's financial means.



New Opportunities for You

Interested in helping others learn more about nature and conservation activities? The Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center is currently taking applications for volunteers. There are many ways you can volunteer your time and talents, give back to the community and help “connect people with the land.”

You’re invited to learn more about the volunteer program by attending the volunteer informational meeting and reception Tuesday, June 29 at 6:30 pm. You’ll learn more about the program, its opportunities and requirements, hear from current volunteers about their involvement and experiences, and receive answers to your questions.

Following informal interviews and acceptance into the program, new volunteers attend initial training classes and then receive additional hands-on preparation according to their interests and involvement.

Some volunteer opportunities include:

Conservation Ambassador – Greets visitors; helps people find information and register for programs; assists with nature shop sales.

Conservation Naturalist – Assists with and presents programs for youth and adults; helps create new activities, games and discovery stations for events; represents the nature center at off-site programs.

Animal Care Assistant – Provides animal care on a weekly or monthly basis for various native amphibians, reptiles and fish; occasionally sets up new displays for live animals.

Naturescaping Team – Manages the native garden beds including mulching, weeding, transplanting and collecting seed; assists with public inquiries regarding the flowers and plants they see.

For more information or to receive an application, please stop in or contact steven.juhlin@mdc.mo.gov.

Volunteer Milestones

100 Hours-Brandi Starzinger

200 Hours-Steve Shelton

300 Hours-Bethany King

500 Hours-Carolyn Huter

1000 Hours-Omayra Hayward



Educators' Niche

The summer months are a great time for educators to relax, refresh, and prepare. For those wanting to get a jump start on preparing, be sure to visit the Nature Center during August. We will have free resource tables located throughout the exhibits. If you don't find what you're looking for on the resource tables, ask to visit the Educator Resource Area. We've recently relocated it, but we still have the same wonderful teacher resources available. This is a great opportunity to relax with your family while preparing for the new school year.

August is also an excellent time to reserve any Discovery Trunks you will want to use during the new school year. As always, the trunks are first come, first serve, so please book early.



JULY/AUGUST

Echoes of Outdoor Missouri

Hike a Missouri River trail and listen to the creatures that live along its wooded bluffs. Pass the day in a tupelo gum swamp. Prepare for a close encounter with the greater prairie-chicken's haunting mating ritual. All the sounds on this 70 minute CD were recorded in Missouri.



Discounted price:
\$6.40 plus tax

The Nature Shop

20% Off

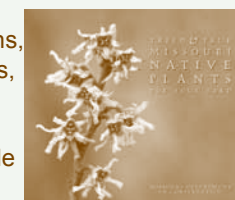
Special monthly discounts ...
(Conservation Heritage Card discounts do not apply)

The Nature Shop features a variety of nature-related books, videos/ DVDs, and resources to increase awareness and knowledge of conservation and the outdoors.

June

Tried and True Missouri Native Plants for Your Yard

Gardeners will find this book indispensable. Its 60-plus pages catalog 111 wildflowers, ferns, grasses, sedges, vines, shrubs and trees for every imaginable landscape use, with notes on growing needs of each. Gorgeous color photos make it suitable for coffee-table display.



Discounted price:
\$4.80 plus tax

Thank You

Donations of Time, Material, and Service

Natural objects: **Claire Mudwiller, Jane Nicholas, Bryan W. Thompson, Danny Kaufman**
Monetary: **Wedel Nilsen**

Paving the Way

Those purchasing paving stones for the Conservation Nature Center walkway:
Barbara & Paul Cummins in memory of Alexis Cummins



Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center is located in North Cape Girardeau County Park off Kingshighway just east of Interstate 55 at exit 99. The building is open Tuesday through Saturday 8am to 5pm and is closed Sundays and Mondays, New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The area is open daily from sunrise to 10pm in accordance with the Cape Girardeau County Park Rules and Regulations.

Nature center grounds and trails are closed to pets, horses, hunting, collecting, littering, fires, and alcoholic beverages. The trails are also closed to bicycles, jogging, in-line skates, skateboards, scooters, and motorized vehicles.

The Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center is operated through hunting and fishing license revenues and through the 1/8% “Design for Conservation” sales tax. There is no admission charge.

Phone: 573/290-5218; Fax: 573/290-5566; Internet: www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/cnc/cape



August Events

Please call the nature center at **573/290-5218** on or after **August 3** for this month's programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

6/7 Duck Decoy Making

Friday 6-9pm & Saturday, 8am-1pm

Would you like to create your own piece of waterfowl hunting history? Learn how to make a duck decoy from rough-cut cork that will entice birds during your next hunting trip.

We'll review duck identification, duck ecology and decoy history as you sculpt and paint your very own Canvasback, Redhead or Ringneck decoy. **Discover Nature — Women** programs are designed to give women 14 years and older the skills and confidence to pursue a wide range of outdoor activities alone, with friends or with their families. **Ages 14 and up. Registration required.** There will be a \$15.00 charge for this course.

Early registration begins July 15

7 Conservation Trails

Castor River-Blue Pond

Saturday, 8:30-4:30pm

This 7-mile trail meanders through stands of upland oaks and hickories, spread over steep broken hills. The clear Castor River runs nearby, but not through the area. The highlight of this hike will be the Blue Pond, a deep, natural sinkhole with clear blue water, which may have been formed by earth movements at the time of the New Madrid earthquake. Meet at the nature center to carpool or ride in our van. This trail rated difficult. **Ages 8 and up. Registration required.**

Early registration begins July 15

snappers

Reptiles and Amphibians

**Tuesday, August 10
6:30-8pm**

Some people love the sight of these creatures while others jump in fright. Regardless of if you love or hate these animals, most people are truly fascinated with the world of reptiles and amphibians. Observe many different species as we learn what makes them so important to Missouri's wildlife. **Snappers** programs are designed for kids ages 7-11. **Registration required.**



RACERS

Froggin'

**Friday, August 13
8-11pm**

Whether you call it Froggin' or Frog Gigging, it is definitely a fun and unique way to spend a summer evening. During this program you can expect to learn the ins and outs of frog gigging and then put your knowledge to practice. Come prepared to get muddy as we snag, bag, and clean the delicious American Bullfrog. **Racers** programs are designed for teens ages 12 – 17. **Registration required.**



13/14 Hunter Education

**Friday, 5:30-9:30pm &
Saturday, 8am-4pm**

This 10-hour hunter education certification course is required for anyone born January 1, 1967, or after, who wants to hunt with a firearm in Missouri. The class is open to ages 11 and up; youth 12 and under must have an adult accompany them. This course begins on Friday evening and continues on Saturday from 8 am until 4 pm. You must attend both sessions and pass a test to receive certification. All students 15 and under must bring proof of age. Bring any previously purchased permits with you to class. **Pre-registration required.** Call 573-290-5730 to register.



14 "Adults Only"

Canoeing Basics

Saturday, 10am-1pm

Did you ever hear the expression "tip a canoe..."? Well that's easy to do if you don't know the basics. Canoeing is a great outdoor activity and Missouri has a lot to offer canoeing enthusiasts. You must learn basic skills before you head out to some of our beautiful Missouri streams. We'll take the canoes out on the lake and learn simple strokes and techniques that may keep you afloat the next time you practice canoeing on a river or lake on your own. **Ages 18 and up. Registration required.**

14 Canoeing Basics

Saturday 1-4pm

If you're thinking about taking the kids out canoeing but you're not sure how, then this is the class for you. We'll learn the basics so that you and your family can enjoy this fun outdoor activity together. **Discover Nature-Families** programs are designed to help adults and children explore nature and master outdoor skills together. **Ages 8 and up. Registration required.**



Mudpuppies

Rascally Rabbits

**Saturday, August 14
9am, 11am, or 1pm**

**Tuesday, August 17
9am, 11am, or 1pm**

Hop on in to the nature center and learn all about rabbits. Make a bunny craft of your own. **Mudpuppies** programs are designed for kids ages 3-6. Please limit attendance to one 45-minute program per month. **Registration required.**



19 Nature Center at Night

Thursday, 5-8pm

Slithering in and out of holes and between rocks and logs, snake tales often exceed the truth. Human's fears of snakes go well beyond instinct and often end in the death of these stunning creatures. While Missouri has roughly 50 different species of snakes, only 5 produce venom. Learn to understand and respect snakes while seeing many different species, including all 5 venomous species, up close and personal. **All ages. Youth and adult groups welcome. No registration required.**

19 Nature Art

Watercolor Pencil Techniques

Thursday, 6:30-8pm

Learn the basic techniques for using stamps and watercolor pencils. We'll provide the supplies and the instruction, so that you can create your own wildflower note cards. If you have your own watercolor pencil set, please feel free to bring it. **Ages 16 and up. Registration required.**

21 Hummingbird Celebration

Saturday, 7am-3pm

Those fortunate enough to have hummingbirds visit their feeders know how amazing these birds are. Their size, iridescent plumage, and flight capabilities make them one of the most unique birds in Missouri. Join us as we celebrate the peak migratory season of these ruby gems. Check out our Master banders at work as they band the hummingbirds starting at 7 a.m. Information stations and seminars will provide tips on attracting hummingbirds, gardening, feeder care and much more. Kids can check out our fledgling fun corner too. **All ages. No registration required.**

28 Discover Hunting

Small Game Hunting

Saturday, 10am-12pm

Small game hunting is an excellent way to enter the world of hunting and this class is designed for the beginning hunter. We will cover topics such as what to hunt, when to hunt and animal sign. Participants will have an opportunity to handle the equipment needed for a successful hunt including guns, calls and clothing. Lastly, participants will have a chance to taste some of the harvest. **Discover Hunting** programs are designed to help youth and adults experience the rich traditions of hunting through shooting skills, classes and hunting clinics. **Ages 11 and up. Registration required.**



28 Discovery Station

Incredible Insects

Saturday, 1-4pm

What a huge insect you have but what is it? What an intriguing question. This month's discovery station is a great way to familiarize you with some of Missouri's insects. We have thousands of insects in Missouri so come discover what makes these creatures so unique. **All ages. Youth and adult groups welcome. No registration required.**

Monthly Temporary Display

June

Through keen observation, watercolor artist Kathryn Breitenstein encourages her viewers to explore the natural world around them through her detailed paintings. The clean, luminous colors and the play on light make watercolors the perfect medium for painting nature.

July

View the nature center's gallery in July to experience the "Captured Beauty of Missouri's Nature," a photography exhibit by Alex Forster.

August

Visit the nature center's gallery in August to view photography and artwork by the Swamp Candle Birders.

Newsletter in the Mail or Online...

To receive your newsletter electronically, simply go to the Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center's web page at <<http://mdc.mo.gov/areas/cnc/cape/>> and sign up for the *Tupelo Times* online. You will receive a follow-up email reminder that you will need to respond to in order to activate your enrollment. A **quarterly** email reminder will be sent with a link to the *Tupelo Times* online. The newsletter will look exactly the same as the mailed version but will be in .pdf format. You will be given the opportunity to unsubscribe with each email you receive. This electronic email list will not be shared with other parties.

Green Tree Frog (Hyla cinerea)



Green Tree Frog
Hyla cinera (Schnider)

Green tree frogs live in the few remaining swamps and sloughs found throughout southeastern Missouri. Their green coloration makes for excellent camouflage allowing them to hide amongst the leaves. During summer evenings they come to life as they search the swamps for their insect prey, often while calling out their nasally quank, quank, quank.

Just Ask...

Q. Where did all of the hummingbirds go?

A. Starting in mid-May you might have noticed a decline in the number of hummingbirds that are visiting your feeders. This is a normal occurrence that can be explained by the fact that this is the time for nesting and a time for blooming flowers.

During the summer, several of the wildflowers that are blooming are just too tempting for Ruby-throated hummingbirds to pass up. Flowers like trumpet creeper, jewelweed, and wild bergamot are just a few examples of hummingbird favorites.

In addition to blooming wildflowers, the late spring and early summer is the time for female hummingbirds to keep busy with nest building, incubation, and collecting protein-rich insects and spiders for their young to eat. Don't worry, once the chicks have fledged, you will notice an increase in the number of hummingbirds that visit your feeder.

Q. Do I need to add red food coloring to my hummingbird sugar water?

A. The answer is no. Many of us have grown up watching our grandparents or parents add red food coloring to the hummingbird sugar water with the intent to better attract hummingbirds. However, this is not a necessary additive. Most hummingbird feeders that you can purchase are already red in color. The red feeders with clear sugar water are just as likely to attract hummingbirds as the red feeders with red sugar water.

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June Events

Please call the nature center at **573/290-5218** on or after **June 1** for this month's programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

5 Women's Field Day *Saturday, 9am-3pm*

Hey ladies! Get ready for a day of fun and learning with other women at our Discover Nature Women: Outdoor Skills Field Day! Try your hand at archery, fly fishing, outdoor cooking, or canoeing. Learn the basics of hunting or animal/plant identification. You can decide which activities

you wish to attend but whatever your choices, you're guaranteed to have a great adventure! To receive a registration form and additional information, contact the nature center at 573-290-5218. **Discover Nature — Women** programs are designed to give women 14 years and older the skills and confidence to pursue a wide range of outdoor activities alone, with friends or with their families. **Ages 18 and up (age 14 and up when accompanied by an adult).** Registration required.

Early registration begins May 1

10 Nature Center at Night *Thursday, 5-8pm*

Ponds are full of life! Get a chance to discover the wonders of this unique habitat at this month's "Nature Center at Night" event. We will learn about pond animal life cycles and will get hands on experience pond scooping for aquatic animals. Come ready to explore and make sure you wear clothes and shoes you don't mind getting muddy! **All ages. Youth and adult groups welcome.** No registration required.

10 Nature Art Plant Prints *Thursday, 6:30-8pm*

Natural materials are a great resource for making many craft projects. Leaves and bleach can be used to make an interesting print on any colored t-shirt. Join us to learn about the many shapes of leaves as you create your own individual wearable art. Participants will need to bring a colored 100% cotton t-shirt that has been washed. **Ages 16 and up.** Registration required.

10 & 12 Underground Exploration *Thursday 6:30-8pm & Saturday, TBA*

Missouri is the cave state with over 6,000 caves and Perry County is home to 500 of them. Would you like to explore this underground world? The nature center is partnering with the SEMO Grotto of the National Speleological Society to offer a beginning caving course which concludes with a caving field trip on Saturday, June 12 (participants must attend the evening program to visit the cave on Saturday). Attendees will learn how caves are formed, see wildlife species that live in this underground habitat, practice basic caving techniques and learn what equipment to use for safe exploration. **Ages 18 and up (ages 14 and up with parent).** Registration required.

12 Fishing *Saturday 1-4pm*

Let's go fishing! Come out to the nature center and share a fun time with a family member. Learn how to fish and pass this information on to future generations. **Discover Nature - Families** are designed to help adults and children explore nature and master outdoor skills together. **All ages. Youth and adult groups welcome.** Registration required.

Mudpuppies

Fabulous Fishing *Saturday, June 12 9am, 11am, or 1pm Tuesday, June 15 9am, 11am, or 1pm*

We've got worms, poles, hooks and fish. Join us for some fabulous fishing fun at the kid's fishing pond. **Mudpuppies** programs are designed for kids ages 3-6. Please limit attendance to one 45-minute program per month. Registration required.

snappers

Nighttime at the Museum *Friday, June 18, 7pm- Saturday, June 19, 9am*

When the doors close and the lights turn down, the nature center comes alive. What do the animals do when the building has emptied? Explore White Oak Trace to discover what stirs after dark. Activities will include evening fishing, owl prowls, outdoor campfire and snakes alive. Don't miss this exciting chance to walk on the wild side. **Snappers** programs are designed for kids ages 7-11. Registration required.

19 "Adults Only" Pan Fishing *Saturday, 7am-3pm*

When the fish are jumping there's no better time to cast a few lures on the Castor River. We'll be aiming for pan fish, learning some basic techniques and tips on how to tie artificial lures and live bait, where and how to cast, and more. We'll walk the banks, wade in the water and maybe catch a few fish, too! If you have your favorite pole and equipment, bring them along. Otherwise we'll supply you with all you'll need to enjoy a few hours casting on the Castor. **Ages 18 and up.** Registration required.

19 Discovery Station Something's Fishy *Saturday, 1-4pm*

This discovery station will show fishing prospects at selected Missouri lakes and streams, feature "An Introduction to FISHING" by Tom Cwynar and offer a take home booklet "Kids Fishing: it's catching on!" Fishing rules and regulations will also be available. **All ages. Youth and adult groups welcome.** No registration required.

RACERS

Watering Wildlife *Wednesday, June 23 6:30-8pm*

Don't let the summer heat get to you! Instead, refresh your backyard wildlife by making a nature-inspired, concrete bird bath to take home. By doing so, you will discover the many types of inhabitants that will be drawn to your backyard oasis! Please come dressed for a mess. **Racers** programs are designed for teens ages 12 – 17. Registration required.

24 Geocaching 101 *Thursday, 6:30-8pm*

What is a GPS? Can it really keep you from getting lost? Are there really hidden treasures called geocaches in your area? Come learn the basics of using GPS, or global positioning system, with the help of Bob Gillespie. You'll learn about GPS technology, then you'll go outside to try your hand at geocaching in the nearby parks and trails. Bring your own GPS, or we'll provide one for you. **Discover Nature - Families** programs are designed to help adults and children explore nature and master outdoor skills together. **Ages 8 and up.** Registration required.

26 Conservation Trails Bell Mountain Wilderness *Saturday, 8:30am-4:30pm*

Most of Bell Mountain Wilderness is rugged, dry and rocky, forested by oaks and hickories with a scattering of pine. Glades and outcrops provide havens for lizard, pileated woodpecker, wood thrush, and ovenbird. The uninterrupted views of the mountain are marvelous and peacefulness abounds. **Ages 8 and up.** Registration required.

Tadpoles

Creepy, Crawly Creatures *Saturday, June 26 9am or 11am*

Who creeps, crawls, or slithers? Get up close with some creepy crawly critters this month as we learn more about them and where they live. **Tadpoles** programs are designed for infants and toddlers ages 0-2. These are outdoor stroller walks where a child can experience nature with his/her parent or adult. Registration required.

26 River Ecology Day *Saturday, 9am-3pm*

Here is your opportunity to truly discover the Mississippi River and all of its mysteries. Hands on activities will teach you about this river's changes through time, the importance of wetlands and human interactions. This event will be fun for the entire family and feature crafts, games and rides on the Mississippi. Registration required for riverboat tours but not for ongoing activities. **Ages 18 and up.** Registration required.



July Events

Please call the nature center at **573/290-5218** on or after **July 1** for this month's programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

1 Conservation Café with guest Alex Forster *Thursday, 6:30-8:30pm*

Alex Forster, native to St. Louis, was born and raised on a farm setting in Creve Coeur, Missouri. He has always had a great appreciation and love for nature and wildlife. Through his photography, Alex displays a special ability to see and capture "life" in unique and insightful ways, and shares these perspectives with viewers. His work showcases the awe and wonder of God's creations. **Ages 8 and up.** Registration required.

Early registration begins June 15

8 Nature Center at Night *Thursday, 5-8pm*

We're cooking up something special at the nature center and you're invited! We will demonstrate some fun and traditional ways of cooking in the outdoors. We will cook in a box, in a can, on the grill and in Dutch ovens. We might even throw something in the fire, too! **All ages. Youth and adult groups welcome.** No registration required.

8 Nature Art Scrapbooking *Thursday, 6:30-8pm*

Do you want to preserve one of your outdoor memories? Scrapbooking allows you to keep those memories alive. **Bring four or five 4 x 6 photographs** of your summer outdoor adventure and any memorabilia to create a two-page layout. **Ages 16 and up.** Registration required.

Mudpuppies

Nature's Nightlights *Saturday, July 10 9am, 11am, or 1pm Tuesday, July 13 9am, 11am, or 1pm*

Fireflies! What makes them glow on a summer evening? Discover this and more. Create a glowing firefly of your own. **Mudpuppies** programs are designed for kids ages 3-6. Please limit attendance to one 45-minute program per month. Registration required.

RACERS

Summer Camping *Friday, July 9, 5pm- Saturday, July 10, 3pm*

Join us for a camping adventure at the Castor River Conservation Area. This fun-filled overnight trip will include fishing, canoeing, hiking, outdoor cooking, and more. Our nature center staff and volunteers will lead you in the fun of exploring in the water and on the land. Tents, food, transportation to and from the nature center and outdoor skills equipment will be provided. In the case of rain, dormitory-style accommodations will be provided. **Racers** programs are designed for teens ages 12 – 17. Registration required.

10 "Adults Only" Nature Photography Workshop *Saturday, 8:30am-12:30pm*

Join nature photographer Charlie Wilson for a review of the basics of capturing images of nature at its best. We will cover composition, lighting techniques, exposure and close-up (macro) techniques and then have a field session to put that knowledge into practice. Bring your camera, tripod, lenses and any other gear you need. **Ages 18 and up.** Registration required.

13-16 Outdoor Adventure Camp *Tuesday-Friday 8:30am-4:30pm*

Help celebrate our first Outdoor Adventure Camp as we explore Missouri's Fish, Forest and Wildlife. Participants will have the opportunity to learn outdoor skills such as cooking, fishing and archery. Adventure Camp will also take the show on the road as we visit local Conservation Areas to discover unique ecosystems in Southeast Missouri. Participants are required to register for and attend all four days of camp. . **Ages 9-12.** Registration required.

snappers

Aquatic Quality Quest *Saturday, July 17 10-11:30am*

Predatory dragons of water and sky, bugs that row with oars and those that can walk on water, the world's smallest floating plants - all of these and much more live in the nature center's marsh, along with frogs, turtles and birds. We will investigate above and below the surface of this fascinating ecosystem and learn why wetlands are important. **Snappers** programs are designed for kids ages 7-11. Registration required.

17 Discovery Station Snakes of Missouri *Saturday, 1-4pm*

This month's discovery station is a great way to familiarize you with some of Missouri's snakes. We have 52 snakes in Missouri. Come discover why these unique creatures are important and what we should do if we encounter one of them. **All ages. Youth and adult groups welcome.** No registration required.

23/24 Insect Collection *Friday, 6-9pm & Saturday, 8am-2pm*

What has six legs, a hard exoskeleton, wings, and is the most plentiful group of animals on the planet? Insects. Studying insects is a wonderful introduction to the complexity of nature. It is also a great way to spend time outdoors. You will learn how to catch, pin, and identify insects. Supplies will be provided for this two day program. **Discover Nature - Families** programs are designed to help adults and children explore nature and master outdoor skills together. **Ages 8 and up.** Registration required.



EXPLORE THE NEW "KID'S NATURE NOOK"

*...where your little ones will find
puzzles, books, animal artifacts,
puppets and more just for them
(located at the rear of the building by
the fish aquarium).*

PHOTO CONTEST

Sand prairies are the rarest natural community in Southeast Missouri and certainly one of the rarest statewide. Presently less than 2,000 acres of medium to high quality sand prairies and savannas remain in Southeast Missouri. This small fraction of remaining habitats supports wildlife native to these grasslands. Sand prairie remnants and conservation lands support rare plants and animals; from sand hickory, to snoutbean, to Illinois Chorus Frogs, sand cicadas, and many other splendid organisms just waiting to be photographed.

Sand Prairie Conservation Area, in Scott County, is a great area to see a representative sand prairie landscape and see many of these unique organisms. The sand prairie photography contest is a great way to capture the grandeur and subtle beauty of this unique natural community type and the plants and animals that call it home.

For more details, stop by the Nature Center to pick up an entry form for this year's contest. In particular, we are looking for excellent photographs of sand prairie landscapes and striking macro photos of native plants and animals.

Contest winners will receive prizes for the best of show and place in category. Photographs should be submitted by November 17, 2010. Please pick up an entry form for more information and guidelines. Please help us enjoy the beauty of the sand prairie.

31 Conservation Trails Apple Creek *Saturday, 8:30-4:30pm*

Steep hills and narrow valleys characterize this area of Apple Creek Conservation Area. Our hike will include a portion of the 5 mile Apple Creek trail. Join nature center volunteers for this moderate hike through the picturesque and historic area of Northern Cape Girardeau County. We may also make a stop at the Ball Mill Resurgence and Tower Rock. **Ages 8 and up.** Registration required.